

Special Services Advisory Committee

October 23, 2008

Members Present: Trisha Nepper, Teri O'Grady, Bonnie Siegel, Cheri Sylla, Jesus Mireles, Don Daniels, Lorie Johnston, Sharon Fliess, Kathy Evans, Julie Turkoske, Nichole Hunkins, Sheryl Gerstl, Ann Shurte, Kate Krahling

Members Absent: Dennis Farrell, Eve Altizer, Barbara Fredericks, Mary Jo Foye, Mary Beth Jezo-Sywoulka, Missy Kueht-Becker, Stephanie Mauck, Sherry Perez, Ken & Julie Perkins, Lori Turim

The meeting began at 1:10 PM.

Introduction and Contact Information Update:

Don Daniels asked that all members introduce themselves and their role, and state how long they have been a part of the Advisory Committee. Don also asked the committee if email correspondence was an appropriate way to be in contact. All members agreed.

Approval of 4/17/08 and 7/24/08 Minutes:

Julie Turkoske stated that she contacted Julie Bryda regarding the corrected minutes from the April 17th meeting. She gave Julie a deadline to respond with any additions or changes. Since Mrs. Bryda has not responded to the request, it is assumed that the minutes are acceptable. Don asked for approval for both the April 17 and the July 24 minutes; the committee agreed.

Continued Discussion of Combining FSP and Birth-to-Three, and a name:

The committee continued the discussion of combining the FSP and the Birth to-Three Advisory Committees. Because of the difficulty of the Birth-to-Three Committee recruiting members, (Missy Kueht-Becker is the sole committee member) Jesse Mireles suggested that the Birth-to-Three Committee merge with the Family Support Committee. Kate Krahling, Birth-to-Three, explained that Missy Kueht-Becker was in agreement with making the change. The committee agreed to merge these two committees and change the name to *Special Services Advisory Committee*.

Committee members also asked whether this committee should be combined with adult children also. Don explained that most adult children (children age 18+ with a PD or DD) diagnosis would transition to ADRC. The other adult children (SED) would remain in FSP/waiver up until the age of 21 for FSP or 22 for the waiver. The committee decided not to include adults because of these reasons.

Discussions ensued about Joe Vitale possibly replacing Dennis Farrell on the committee. The committee decided that Mr. Vitale should be invited to attend future meetings.

Policy changes to support efforts to merge funding sources – continued discussion:

Don explained that discrepant policies between the two programs make them difficult to merge. Don explained that he required cross training for all Waiver or FSP staff. Julie Bryda and Katie Sepnieski from the Children's Service Section provided this. Don explained that during the FSP training, Mrs. Bryda was very clear that the FSP program has changed. He explained that it is unclear when the change happened, but that Julie

described that in the past FSP would pay for almost anything without regard to the child's needs or disability. Mrs. Bryda also explained that the "new" FSP program must look at the child's disability and the child's needs to keep the child in the home. Don provided a copy of the FSP manual printout to all present that described the policy. He explained that because both he and Lorie Johnston are new to the program, that FSP staff are meeting with him discuss requests. Don explained that Trisha Nepper's experience with FSP has been different, and stated that he has struggled to keep FSP in line with what the State's message is now.

Don gave an example of how the Children's Waiver would handle Speech, OT, and PT services, stating that the services are not covered in the waiver. Lorie Johnston clarified that the only circumstances in which the waiver would cover those services would be when there is a recommendation for a specific amount, and private insurance and MA is exhausted. Lorie also explained that using a provider that does not bill MA does not constitute an MA denial. Don also gave the example of a parent who requested reimbursement for a *Speedo* swimsuit to build a child's self-esteem. The committee members all agreed that they felt the request was inappropriate for FSP funds. Don also provided the example of purchasing a TV/DVD combo for a child's bedroom. The committee gave input that it would depend on the circumstances whether FSP funds should be used. A family YMCA membership was also discussed. Julie Turkoske explained that the intent has to be considered, and to keep in mind that the program is for the family and not just the child. The committee members felt that a YMCA membership was helpful to the parents as a stress relief and used to stay healthy, which they felt in turn provides them the ability to continue to care for their children. Don explained that the above examples are issues that the FSP staff struggle with on a daily basis, and will continue to do so until a shared philosophy emerges. Don also said that the county is not trying to say "no" to requests, but to work within the guidelines that the State has directed.

Discussion turned to concerns about requiring supporting documentation for purchases and how this delays getting needed items/services. The discussion also included information about how FSP funds cannot be used for experimental services/items. Don stated that he will continue to come to the committee for policies and defined rules for the program.

Jesse Mireles explained Don Daniels' role in out-of-home placements, and how the county needs to direct services to keep children in the home.

Don turned the discussion to local match funding, and how FSP funds can be locally matched to the waiver as a way to serve more children and families. He also discussed the 18 new Children's Waiver slots that the county received from the state. Kathy Evans asked how the children were chosen for those slots. Don explained that children at high risk for out of home placement with the highest level needs were considered.

Don also explained the new referral process and application to the programs as the FSP unit and Waiver unit has merged into Special Needs Unit. He explained that the FSP

service coordinators will be assessing all children to determine which program will fit the child/family's needs best. There was some confusion about the waiver from some committee members. Don explained that almost every FSP child is eligible for the waiver. He also explained that the county board has stated that no new county dollars can be spent on children, which means that there would just be a waiting list for the waiver with no movement. The exception is for those children who have a history of spending, the county can prove that there is no new funding being spent and shift the FSP funds to the waiver. Jesse explained the different pots of funding and the idea of multiple funding sources.

Update – combining CLTS waivers with UCP and FSP:

Don continued the discussion of the new assessment process. The discussion moved to how the county maintained an internal FSP wait list, but that it was never reported to the State, and how this information has been added to the State HSRS (Human Services Reporting System).

Don explained the UCP/Waiver merge, and how the county is using the waiver to open up UCP funding for other kids. He explained that 53 children on the waiver were receiving funding from UCP and the funding was shifted to the waiver. This gives UCP the opportunity to serve that many more children off the UCP waiting list.

Don also described the idea of merging FSP and Waiver cases that overlap, meaning that there will be one service coordinator and one file. This process has not started with more than one child because it is time consuming for staff. Don explained that there are 84 children that overlap with FSP and the waiver, and once these cases are merged, there is a potential to take that many more children off of the FSP wait list.

Don described how 150+ children will be removed from the FSP waiting list because the questionnaires were not returned, which will help staff have better management of the active cases.

The discussion moved to guardianship for children who are reaching age 18. Don explained that the directive was given that guardianship would not be done by FSP because of workload. The suggestion was for families to contact an attorney, or APS would do it for a child with assets under \$5000.

Don passed out a rough draft of the 2009 FSP questionnaire for review. Discussion ensued regarding how the questions are asked and suggestions from the committee were taken into consideration. The question regarding family income will be modified to reflect more realistic ranges for today's families. Other suggestions were to consider using options of the questionnaire of "Not Applicable".

Outreach:

The committee did not discuss this agenda item due to time.

Yearly Applications:

The committee did not discuss this agenda item due to time.

Next Meeting Date and Agenda:

Discussion of the next meeting's agenda included a request for a presentation from Birth-to-Three of what they need/want from the Special Services committee. Also, Don will present the FSP/Waiver update. The next Special Services meeting is scheduled for **January 15, 2009 at 1:00 PM.**

Lorie Johnston offered that the Family Support Manual can be found at:

<http://dhs.wisconsin.gov/bdds/fsp/index.htm> .

The Special Services Committee meeting ended promptly at 2:40 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Lorie Johnston, FSP Service Coordinator.